

Applicability of the Concepts of Operational Design in a Peace Environment

**A Monograph
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Abstract

Applicability of the Concepts of Operational Design in a Peace Environment by
MAJOR Jonathon R. Moelter, US Army, 47 pages.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union as a world power and other geopolitical conflicts has and continues to present opportunities for numerous groups who aggressively seek power or autonomy. The resulting violence often requires a combination of diplomacy, military intervention and economic assistance to reach a long-term solution. While the United States executes the war against the Iraqi regime, planning is ongoing for the stability operations that will follow. The number one task of the US Army is to fight and win our nations war. However, as military missions continue to broaden from combat operations to humanitarian relief and stability operations, problems may not be resolved through the application of traditional combat power. Success in these missions requires a change in the military's mental model of force destruction to peace preservation, and a transition in doctrine to match this change. Although there is specific doctrine for peace and stability operations, there is no difference in the basic concepts of operational design between combat and peace operational planning. *FM 100-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict* (LIC) states, "Long-range planning for LIC uses the same logic process commanders use in campaign planning during conventional war." Center of gravity, decisive points, and lines of operation are clearly defined terms used in planning combat operations, but how these terms apply in the development of peace operations planning is confusing. Therefore, the question is, are war fighting concepts applicable in the planning process for peace operations?

The monograph explores US intervention in Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti as case studies to determine how the concepts of operational design were applied to peace operations. It also reviews the theories of Clausewitz and Jomini with a comparison to US Army doctrine. The findings are: (1) The concept of center of gravity is most useful in analyzing the friendly situation in order to determine what friendly capability is most important to protect. However, US Army commanders and planners often find it difficult to identify an enemy center of gravity. Often decisive points such as key ports or cities were selected as centers of gravity. Army doctrine for peace operations does not adequately define the concept or explain its applicability. If the concept of center of gravity is the key to successfully achieving ones objectives, it is difficult to understand why Army doctrine does not provide greater detail on its applicability in a peace environment. (2) Lines of operation and decisive points are found to be of greater use in a peace environment in determining how best to achieve the operational objectives. However, in a peace environment, decisive points will be more abstract along logical lines of operation to the achievement of the end state. (3) There must be a change in the military's mental model of how one views the enemy in a peace environment. As discussed in Army peace operations doctrine, in such an operation, the enemy will often be one of many environmental factors such as famine, drought, lawlessness, local politics, etc... An in-depth analysis must be completed to identify the many factors that may be considered enemies to the peace process. Finally recommendations are to revise Army doctrine in order to identify and define the concepts of operational design in a peace environment. The monograph recommends military planners concentrate on the factors that can be considered enemies to the peace process and the desired end state in order to identify the decisive points along logical lines of operations; keeping in mind second and third order affects. Additionally, an analysis must be done to determine what second and third order affects may result when military actions are taken against a decisive point. Center of gravity analysis should be used in analyzing the friendly situation but its applicability and value in determining enemy strengths or freedom of movement are limited in a peace environment.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The disintegration of the Soviet Union as a world power and other geopolitical conflicts has and continues to present opportunities for numerous groups who aggressively seek power or autonomy. The world witnessed this effect in Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Kosovo and many other countries throughout the 1990s. The resulting violence often requires a combination of diplomacy, military intervention and economic assistance to reach a long-term solution. There is a constant call for the United States to intervene or assist in support and stability operations. Even while the United States executes the war against the Iraqi regime, planning is ongoing for the stability operations that will follow. The goal of peace operations--to halt the violence between belligerent factions or maintain peace while local authorities attempt to return a country to normalcy--presents unique, complex challenges for military forces. The number one task of the US Army is to fight and win our nations war. However, as military missions continue to broaden from combat operations to humanitarian relief and stability operations, problems may not be resolved through the application of traditional combat power. Success in these missions require a change in the military's mental model of force destruction to peace preservation, and a transition in doctrine to match this change. Although there is specific doctrine for peace and stability operations, there is no difference in the basic concepts for campaign design between combat and peace operational planning. *FM 100-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict* (LIC) categorizes peace keeping as a form of low intensity conflict. It states, "Long-range planning for LIC uses the same logic process commanders use in campaign planning during conventional war."¹ Center of gravity, decisive points, and lines of operation are clearly defined terms used in planning combat operations, but how these terms apply in the development of peace

¹ US Army, *FM 100-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict* (Washington: HQ Dept of the Army, December 1990), 4.

operations planning is confusing. Therefore, the question is, are these war fighting terms applicable in the planning process for peace operations?

Purpose

The purpose of this monograph is to determine the applicability of the terms center of gravity, decisive points, and decisive operations in planning peace operations. As the US prosecutes the war against the regime of Iraq, there will be a transition to stability and peace operations while a new government forms. In past peace operations, strategic guidance has often been vague, with external influences making the process of transforming political goals into viable military objectives difficult. There is very little information in Army and joint operational and stability operations doctrine concerning the application of center of gravity, decisive points, and decisive operations while planning peace operations. Additionally, during peace operations military commanders are often not provided specific end state conditions and usually must determine critical tasks as his force is executing their mission. Case studies of US involvement in Bosnia, Somalia, and Haiti will demonstrate the difficulty military planners experience in determining centers of gravity and identifying decisive points along physical and logical lines of operations in order to achieve the desired end state.

Methodology

The methodology used to answer the research question will be a descriptive comparison between conventional war fighting doctrine and peace operations doctrine. *FM 100-23, Peace Operations*, states, “peace operations create and sustain the conditions necessary for peace to flourish.”² There are three forms of peace operations: (1) peacekeeping, (2) peace enforcement, and (3) support to diplomacy. Peacekeeping involves military operations undertaken with the

² Department of the Army, *FM 100-23, Peace Operations* (Washington: HQ Dept of the Army, December 1994), iv.

consent of the major belligerent parties. Peace enforcement is the use or threat to use military force, normally in pursuant to international authorization, to compel compliance with generally accepted resolutions or sanctions. Support to diplomacy consists of peacemaking, peace building, and preventive diplomacy.³ The US involvement in Bosnia highlights the significance of support to diplomacy, specifically peace building. According to *FM 100-23*, “peace building consists of post-conflict actions, primarily diplomatic that strengthen and rebuild civil infrastructures and institutions in order to avoid a return to conflict. Military as well as civilian involvement is normally required.”⁴ *FM 100-23* further identifies activities such as restoring civil authority, rebuilding physical infrastructures, and reestablishing commerce, schools, and medical facilities as possible components to peace building. The three case studies will present an historical analysis of the three types of peace operations. These case studies are the US involvement or intervention in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia.

Criteria

Using the three case studies and Army doctrine, the following criteria will be used to determine the applicability of the terms center of gravity, decisive points, and lines operation:

- 1) Did determining a center of gravity focus the planning effort in achieving the desired end state?
- 2) Was there a definable standard approach to identifying a center of gravity throughout the three case studies?
- 3) Was the doctrinal definition used in determining a center of gravity in the three case studies?
- 4) Was there value added in determining a center of gravity?
- 5) Were decisive points and lines of operations identified in the three case studies?

³ Ibid., 5-6.

⁴ Ibid., 2.

- 6) Were the doctrinal definitions used in determining decisive points and lines of operations?
- 7) Did the identification of a center of gravity drive the selection of objectives, decisive points and associated lines of operations?
- 8) Based on the case studies, does Army doctrine provide adequate definitions of the concepts of center of gravity, decisive points, and lines of operation in relation to the peace environment?

Constraints and Limitations

The major constraint in developing this monograph is in the desire to promote the widest distribution of the research; the information provided must remain unclassified. The primary limiting factor of the research is the fact that the majority of OPLANS and lessons learned, in reference to the three case studies, remain classified. Although there is an abundance of unclassified information, it does not provide the fidelity of information that would be available in original planning documents and orders. However, the information available does provide adequate examples of the application of the concepts of operational planning.

Case Study: Somalia

Somalia is an example of a humanitarian relief or peacekeeping operation that later regressed to a peace enforcement operation. After the exile of President Siad Barre in January 1991, widespread anarchy plagued the country while at least thirteen clans and sub-clans fought for regional or national control.⁵ While Mogadishu became a wasteland, the interim president Ali Mahdi and Mohammed Farah Aidid fought for power and control of the nation.

⁵ Jonathan Stevenson, *Losing Mogadishu: Testing U.S. Policy in Somalia* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 3.

On 23 January 1992, the UN Security Council passed a resolution that imposed an arms embargo on Somalia, called for humanitarian aid, and urged a cease-fire. In April 1992, after Aidid and Ali Mahdi agreed to the cease-fire, the UN established the United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNISOM I) with a goal to facilitate humanitarian aid to people trapped by the ongoing civil war and famine.⁶ US involvement began in August of 1992 with the initiation of Operation Provide Relief. US Air Force C-130 transport planes began bringing food and medical supplies to the interior cities of Somalia. As the cease-fire began to break, looting and shelling closed the port of Mogadishu, preventing the offloading of humanitarian supplies. In the summer of 1992, the Senate and House passed concurrent resolutions urging President Bush to work with the UN to deploy a peacekeeping force in Somalia. Operation Restore Hope began on 4 December 1992. In a television address President Bush said to the people of Somalia, "We come to your country for one reason only, to enable the starving to be fed."⁷ US forces took the lead of the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) with a mission to create the secure environment necessary for the UN to provide humanitarian relief and promote national reconciliation and economic reconstruction of the Somalia nation.⁸ Although there was evidence of cooperation between UNITAF and Aidid, armed conflict between clans continued. After the first American soldier was killed in January 1993, the ongoing violence convinced the US command that disarmament had to become part of their mission. While US Marines began raiding arsenals and seizing weapons, the distance grew between UNITAF and the people of Somalia. In March 1993, the UN Secretary-General recommended to the UN Security Council the transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II and US forces began to withdraw from Somalia.⁹

⁶ Ibid., 14-17.

⁷ George Bush, "Address to the Nation on the Situation in Somalia," 4 December 1992 {on-line}; available from <http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu>; Internet; accessed on 23 October 2002.

⁸ Lester H. Brune, *The United States and Post-Cold War Interventions: Bush and Clinton in Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia, 1992-1998* (Claremont: Regional Books, 1998), 21.

⁹ Stevenson, 57.

With the transition to UNOSOM II and the continued weapons seizure operations, Aidid began to show contempt for the UN operation. By the end of February, anti-American riots and violence were prevalent throughout Mogadishu. Aidid transmitted messages over Radio Mogadishu characterizing UN soldiers as an occupation force to be resisted. US and UN forces found themselves transitioning from peace keeping to peace enforcement.

Case Study: Haiti

Haiti is a case where US planned peace enforcement operations changed to peacekeeping during the deployment phase of the operation. In a democratic election, Haiti voted Jean-Bertrand Aristide president in December 1990. From the beginning, Aristide experienced difficulties governing. Shortly after his election, violence broke out in the streets of the capital city, Port-au-Prince.

On September 30, 1991, after only seven months in office, officers of the Haitian army overthrew the government, and Aristide went into exile.¹⁰ While the U.S. focused on restoring the elected civilian government in Haiti, the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) took up Aristide's cause and sought to mediate between Aristide and the military.¹¹ On June 16, 1993, the UN Security Council passed a binding resolution imposing an embargo on all petroleum and arms sales to Haiti. The resolution also ordered a freeze on overseas financial assets of Haitian officials and top businessmen.

In July 1993, representatives of the Aristide government and the military met separately with US and UN mediators at Governors Island, New York. During this meeting, government and military representatives agreed on a process and a timeframe for the transition back to a

¹⁰ Ibid., 43-47.

¹¹ Bob Shacochis, *The Immaculate Invasion* (New York: Penguin Group Penguin Putnam Inc., 1999), 36-37.

democratic government. Under the accord, the UN would lift sanctions immediately, the military leaders would step aside, and Aristide returned as president by October 30, 1993.

The US sent a contingent of 193 US and 25 Canadian troops, engineers and trainers, to Haiti aboard the USS Harlan County. The group was an advance of a 1267-man UN police and military mission to train Haitian police and rebuild the Haitian infrastructure, in accordance with the agreed accord. However, demonstrators denied the Harlan County access to the dock. After a one-day standoff, on October 12, 1993, the Harlan County departed Haitian waters. Haitians viewed the pullback as a sign of weakened US resolve to implement the Governors Island agreement. Violence increased sharply.

On October 13, the UN Security Council voted unanimously to re-impose the oil and arms embargo.¹² By early spring, the Defense Department began to assess possible military scenarios in Haiti. In April, USACOM briefed Secretary Perry on military planning accomplished to date. On April 22, 1994, the Clinton Administration announced its intention to seek a total economic embargo of Haiti and threatened the possible use of force to return Aristide to power. On May 5, the UN Security Council passed a resolution demanding the resignation of the Haitian military leaders. With the strong possibility that hostile military action would take place, USACOM tasked the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, to develop a plan (Plan 2370) for a military operation to forcibly remove the Haitian military and establish a secure environment so that Aristide could be restored. USACOM also directed the Army's 10th Infantry Division (Mountain) to develop an alternative plan (Plan 2380) for permissive entry into Haiti. Meanwhile, the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (24 MEU) deployed aboard USS Inchon to the waters off Haiti to send a signal of imminent threat of force.

On July 31, the UN Security Council authorized use of "all necessary means" to restore Aristide to his elected position and authorized the creation of a multinational force for that

¹² Ibid., 38.

purpose. On September 13, U.S. forces began to deploy to Haiti from Norfolk aboard the aircraft carriers America and Dwight D. Eisenhower. On September 16, former President Jimmy Carter, accompanied by Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA) and former Chairman of The Joint Staff, General Colin Powell, departed for Haiti for one last effort to persuade General Cedras and his allies to step aside peacefully. The Carter mission was ultimately successful in negotiating the top military leaders' resignation and departure from Haiti. However, because of the last-minute agreement the US 18th ABN Corps units had already embarked from Ft. Bragg for the invasion and had to be recalled.

On September 19, the US 10th Mountain Division disembarked in Port-au-Prince and entered the city without resistance. The US-led peace keeping mission had begun.

Case Study: Bosnia

The US-led NATO peace enforcement operations in Bosnia transitioned to a mission providing support to diplomacy and are on going. In 1980, the death of Yugoslavia president Josip Broz (Tito) left a power vacuum with no one to assume control of the country. Soon the nation slid into economic and political decline as the country's collective leadership began to argue over power and the allocation of shrinking resources among the republics.¹³ The world saw the fall of Yugoslavia between 1990 and 1992 as Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia all seceded from Yugoslavia. The country of Bosnia soon found itself in the middle of a civil war between its Serbian, Bosnian Muslim, and Croatian population.

While the war continued, in September 1991, the UN voted for an arms embargo on all Yugoslavia. The UN Security Council also agreed to the deployment of a United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to separate Serb and Croat armies and to monitor the latest cease-fire agreement. In the Bosnian held elections of February 1992, 99 percent of those voting approved the move towards independence. Bosnian Serbs, who made up 40 percent of the

¹³ Brune, 69.

population, boycotted the elections. Serbian President Milosevic challenged the government of Bosnia by targeting Bosnia's Serbian population with propaganda alleging atrocities against Serbian people. He staged protests against Bosnia's Muslim and Croatian politicians, alleging a Muslim plot to dominate the Serbs. Milosevic financed the Radovan Karadzic led Bosnian Serbs Democratic Party (SDS). On 5 April 5 1992, Karadzic's army erected barricades and began artillery attacks against Sarajevo.

In July 1992, the UN Security Council approved the airlift of humanitarian aid to Sarajevo on US C-130 cargo planes. However, the UN was reluctant to use force against the warring parties even when Serbs blocked aid convoys, refused to move heavy weapons away from the Sarajevo airport and violated the no-fly zones and agreed safe havens. The UN called the mission "peacekeeping" yet there was no peace or cease-fire in Bosnia to keep.

The US slowly became more committed to a greater role in Bosnia after the UN-EU peace efforts again failed in 1993. During late 1993 through early 1994, Bosnian Croats began an offensive against both Bosnian Serbs and Muslims. This triangular conflict increased the danger to UNPROFOR troops who were trying to remain neutral while providing relief and negotiating a cease-fire agreement.¹⁴ Between 1991 and 1995, the world witnessed many failed cease-fire agreements between the warring parties.

In August 1995, President Clinton decided the US would take a more dominant role in finding an agreeable peace settlement. He assigned Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke as the chief negotiator for the US. The US National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake and Peter Tarnoff of the State Department presented President Clinton a recommendation to end the violence in Bosnia. Their recommendation called for the urging of the UN and European allies to use coercion and to take the lead in negotiations for a Bosnian peace. It also recommended direct

¹⁴ James Bjork and Allan E. Goodman, *Pew Case Studies in International Affairs*, "Yugoslavia, 1991-92: Could Diplomacy Have Prevented a Tragedy; Case 467" (Washington: The Institute for the Study of Diplomacy), 5.

US involvement in Bosnian peace negotiations and in aggressive NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serbs to force them to accept peace. After Bosnian Serb mortar attacks on an open market in Sarajevo killed at least 38 on August 28, 1995, NATO began air attacks against Bosnian Serb positions around Sarajevo.¹⁵

Holbrooke and his team traveled from one headquarters to another in attempts to formulate a peace plan and negotiate a cease-fire agreement. The three warring factions agreed to a meeting held in Geneva to discuss a peace agreement.¹⁶ However, NATO was unwilling to cease its air strikes until all parties signed a peace agreement. On the day before the meeting at Geneva, NATO intensified attacks in Bosnia. Bosnian Serb ammunition storage facilities, military installations, communications sites and other essential facilities were hit hard.¹⁷ On September 8, the Geneva meeting was held with the leaders of all three warring factions. On September 14, Holbrooke secured the signatures of the Bosnian Serbs on a fairly agreeable peace proposal. The same day, NATO stopped the air strikes against Bosnian Serbs. Within a month, the official cease-fire went into effect and the true road to peace began. Leaders of each of the three factions officially signed The Dayton Agreement in Paris on December 14, 1995. President Clinton announced on 3 December 1995, he had authorized the first US soldiers to deploy to Bosnia. The US would ultimately send some 20,000 US soldiers to Bosnia as part of the larger, 60,000 personnel NATO Implementation Force (IFOR). To date, the US has not sustained one war casualty in Bosnia and still maintains at least 6,000 soldiers in Bosnia as part of the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR).

¹⁵ Cable News Network, "International Leaders Condemn Sarajevo Attack", [on-line]; available from <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/Bosnia/updates/august95/8-28/reaction.html>; Internet; accessed 14 January 2003.

¹⁶ Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War*, rev. ed. (New York: Random House Inc., 1999), 98.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 107-110.

These three case studies will be the background information used to relate military operations to theory and doctrine in order to assess the relevance of the terms center of gravity, decisive points, and lines of operation and the usefulness of current US Army peace operations doctrine. Analysis of the case studies will answer to the criteria detailed earlier. Finally, to answer the research question a comparison will be made of terms and definitions found in our war fighting and peace operations doctrine to determine if they are synonymous in both war and peace environments.

The following chapters will begin with an analysis of each term's theoretical origin, its use in doctrine, and then a discussion of its application in each of the case studies.

CHAPTER TWO: CENTER OF GRAVITY

For the past 18 years, peace operations have been a focal point for US diplomatic efforts. These operations involved the deployment of military forces, in support of peace operations, to countries such as Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Macedonia, and Kosovo. Peace operations are not new to the Army. What is new is the number, pace, and complexity of recent operations. As the US executes the war on terrorism, military units are experiencing the challenges of conducting both combat and peace operations. Often the transition from war to peace is transparent with both operations occurring if not simultaneously then nearly so. Peace operations often take place in complex environments where the identity of the enemy may be uncertain. US forces conducting peace operations may not encounter large, professional armies or even organized groups. Instead, they may be dealing with a situation similar to Bosnia where multiple belligerent parties have agreed to a peace settlement and US military forces act as observers to the peace process. There are no simple solutions to the complex problems associated with peace operations. So, what tools do military planners have to assist and focus their planning effort in developing a strategy for peace operations? According to doctrine, the answer to this question should be the elements of operational design. US Army *FM 3-0, Operations*, and *FM 100-23, Peace Operations*, claim a

synonymous need to identify centers of gravity for both combat and peace operations. *Joint Publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations*, lists center of gravity analysis as one of the fundamentals of campaign plans and a facet of operational art to consider when planning joint operations.¹⁸ During campaign planning, the concept of center of gravity is an analytical tool, focusing the commander's intent and the overall design of the campaign. The question remains on the utility of the concept of center of gravity in planning peace operations.

US Army *FM 3.0* defines center of gravity as “those characteristics, capabilities or localities from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength or will to fight,” and “destruction or neutralization of the enemy center of gravity is the most direct path to victory.”¹⁹ In December 1994, the Army published *FM 100-23*. The purpose of this doctrine is to assist military commanders, planners, and soldiers in understanding the nature of peace operations. It clearly draws on the Army's experiences in peace operations in Somalia and northern Iraq. The manual prescribes planning guidance that includes the identification of centers of gravity for friendly, belligerent, and neutral parties that may affect the objectives of the operation.²⁰ However, *FM 100-23* does not elaborate on the overarching purpose for incorporating center of gravity identification into the planning process for peace operations. Its concept of center of gravity appears to concentrate on peace enforcement, where the application of military force may be necessary in order to achieve peace however, it seems to ignore the other forms of peace operations. The level of detail in the definition of center of gravity in Army doctrine, specifically concerning peace operations, is ambiguous and limited in scope. If the concept of center of gravity is relevant, US Army doctrine does not adequately detail how the center of gravity is identified or how it is applied once it's determined. In order to better understand the concept and

¹⁸ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government printing Office, date), B-2.

¹⁹ *FM 3-0, Operations*, 5-27.

²⁰ *FM 100-23, Peace Operations*, 31.

its applicability in peace operations planning one must look at its origin with theorist Carl von Clausewitz, how the theory has evolved to today's definition, and how it has been applied in past military operations.

Carl Von Clausewitz first introduced the theory of center of gravity in his work, *On War*. Clausewitz died before *On War* was complete. Therefore, the published work is a collection of his incomplete thoughts, books, essays, and notes. His writings are his initial attempts to lay out a system of thought regarding war. Unsure if he would complete his work before his death, Clausewitz wrote, "I regard the first six books, which are already in a clean copy, merely as a rather formless mass that must be thoroughly reworked once more. The revision will bring out the two types of war with greater clarity at every point. All ideas will then become plainer, their general trend will be more clearly marked, their application shown in greater detail."²¹ The significance of this passage is his theory of center of gravity is defined and discussed in Books VI, "*Defense*" and Book VIII, "*War Plans*", both of which were early editions and not yet synthesized to complete concepts. Although incomplete, Clausewitz's work provides a theoretical model based on many years of thought and analysis from which judgments can be made on the phenomenon of war. Like any initial model, Clausewitz's has been tested, studied, challenged, transformed and applied to our doctrine today. Clausewitz did not intend to have his incomplete theories applied as law but instead, to generate thought and discussion on the subject of war. Therefore, it is not important for our doctrine to mirror the thoughts of Clausewitz. What is important is to study the original work in order to understand and judge the changes made to the original theory and determine the value of these changes. Any argument that Clausewitz's theories are not applied correctly is irrelevant. However, there is value in discussing the applicability of Clausewitz's theory and its usefulness in today's operational environment.

²¹ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 69.

Clausewitz begins this concept in “Book VI” by identifying the concentration of enemy troops as a center of gravity. “A center of gravity is always found where the mass is concentrated most densely. It presents the most effective target for a blow...”²² He also relates the concept to alliances and coalitions. “The fighting forces of each belligerent –whether a single state or an alliance of states—have a certain unity and therefore some cohesion. Where there is cohesion, the analogy of the center of gravity can be applied.” In “Book VIII” he argues that to achieve the strategic aim of war, one does not necessarily need to annihilate his enemy. The commander should identify and exploit the “decisive factors” and “dominant characteristics” of his enemy while understanding his own.²³ He wrote, “Out of these characteristics a certain center of gravity develops, the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends.”²⁴ This, he believed, was the point that all one’s energies should be focused against in order to most efficiently achieve the military objectives or end state. It is also important to point out that although it is most desirable to focus on one center of gravity, it is likely there will be multiple centers that may be traced back to one.²⁵ It may be argued however, that these multiple centers of gravity may be better considered critical capabilities. Clausewitz discusses possibilities for centers of gravity other than the concentration of forces in chapter four of “Book VIII.” He identifies these as a country’s capital, allied forces, an alliance’s community of interest, leaders, and public opinion. However, he returns to his central theme that “defeat or destruction of his [the enemy’s] fighting force remains the best way to begin, and in every case will be a very significant feature of the campaign.”²⁶ The final point from Clausewitz, to be discussed in regards to center of gravity, comes from US Army Lieutenant Colonel Antulio J Echjevarria II’s personal

²² Ibid., 485.

²³ Ibid., 595.

²⁴ Ibid., 596.

²⁵ Ibid., 619.

²⁶ Ibid., 596.

translation of Clausewitz's original work, *Vom Kriege*. In his interpretation he believes one of Clausewitz's salient points on center of gravity was there is only value in determining a center of gravity when the goal is the total destruction of the enemy.²⁷ This being the case, there is clearly a question to the applicability of the center of gravity concept in peace operation where destruction is not the objective. Given the multiple passages from Clausewitz and the definition from Army doctrine, an analysis will be made of US participation in peace operations. The purpose of this analysis is to determine what centers of gravity were identified, what was achieved through this identification, and if these centers of gravity reflected the theories of Clausewitz or the definition in today's Army doctrine.

On 4 December 1992, President Bush ordered US troops to Somalia in support of Operation RESTORE HOPE. Although it was an unstable and chaotic environment, the faction leaders had agreed to the presence of the multinational force therefore, no particular enemy existed. This is the first example of the problem in applying the concept of center of gravity in peace operations the lack of a clearly defined enemy.

As previously stated, US Army doctrine, *FM 100-23*, claims the need to identify the centers of gravity of friendly and belligerent parties. There is clearly a utility to identifying friendly centers of gravity to determine how best to use this advantage or capability and to protect it from inadvertent interference. However, what is the utility of identifying the center of gravity of a belligerent party if they have agreed to the objective of the peace operation?

If the purpose is for the friendly force commander to be prepared to react to a situation where a belligerent party becomes the enemy and military force must be applied to force peace,

²⁷ Antulio J. Echevarrai II, Lieutenant Colonel, US Army "Clausewitz's Center of Gravity: It's Not What We Thought," *Naval War College Review* (Winter 2003) [on-line]; available from <http://www.nwc.navy.mil/press/Review/2003/Winter/pdfs/art4-w03.pdf>. Internet; accessed on 12 February 2003.

then there may be utility in the concept. However, since doctrine does not clarify this, military planners often attempt to apply the concept to the peace process itself.

In Somalia, UNITAF's mission was to create the secure environment necessary for the UN to provide humanitarian relief and promote national reconciliation and economic reconstruction of the Somalia nation.²⁸ US forces faced a complex environment consisting of banditry, relief efforts, starvation, and political anarchy. Major General Steven L. Arnold, US Army forces commander for operation RESTORE HOPE, viewed the center of gravity in Somalia to be the "independent power of the warlords."²⁹ Although not a specified mission, General Arnold believed that the erosion of the warlords power, "voluntarily...or done involuntarily as military situations arise...must take place if Somalia is ever to return to some form of normalcy and attempt to rule itself."³⁰ However, the warlords had agreed to the US-led coalition's presence and objectives. Is it correct to suggest the warlords were the enemy? It may have been more acceptable to identify independent banditry as the enemy or the less tangible concept of the lack of law and order. Initially, there was no clear leader, political capital, mass of forces, or will to fight to target as a center of gravity. In addition, the mission to provide a secure environment for humanitarian operations did not necessarily mean to defeat the warlords. To put it another way, would taking away the independent power of the warlords accomplish the mission of securing the environment? Taking away the power of the warlords may have only increased the problem by creating a power vacuum and increasing banditry and the overall state of lawlessness. Local militia often assisted in maintaining law and order or at least limiting the effects of criminal activity.

²⁸ Stevenson, 56.

²⁹ Steven L. Arnold, Major General, US Army, "Somalia, An Operation Other Than War," *Military Review* (December, 1993), 33.

³⁰ Ibid.

General Joseph Hoar, Commander, United States Central Command, identified Mogadishu as the center of gravity. He stated in an article in the *Joint Forces Quarterly*, “the city had to be relatively secure prior to expanding to the interior where the humanitarian need was most acute.”³¹ Mogadishu may have been the capital of Somalia, however, when Clausewitz discussed the value of determining a national capital as a center of gravity, it was in relation to a politically viable nation. Somalia had no recognized form of central government. Doctrinal concepts would more likely identify Mogadishu a decisive point because of its influence over the outcome of the operation. Critical to friendly lines of communication, controlling Mogadishu provided the capabilities necessary to support humanitarian operations.

In planning for peace operations the most difficult problem in selecting an enemy center of gravity may first be the identification of the enemy. Analyzing the Somalia problem logically, one might list a number of possible enemies such as: (1) environmental factors, famine and draught cause desperation among the population; (2) any of the major clans fighting for control; or (3) violence, as the general state of the country, prevents the promotion of peace. Identifying violence as the enemy may have guided UNITAF into determining lawlessness as a center of gravity. Lawlessness allows all levels of crime or violence to occur without the fear of punitive action. It also allows the proliferation of the free and independent actions of gangs or clans. As law and order fail, it becomes more beneficial to participate in criminal activities and to strengthen the ties to individual clans. Therefore, violence gains its power and freedom of movement throughout the society through the absence of law and order. Had lawlessness been determined to be the enemy center of gravity in Somalia, the military effort may have been better focused in providing an international police force or training local police to control criminal activity. Law and order could not only prevent or deter the individual acts of violence but also the criminal activities of organized clans. Once law and order was established military and

³¹ Joseph P. Hoar, General, US Army, “A CINC’s Perspective,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*. No.2. (Autumn 1993), 59.

diplomatic efforts could have then moved forward to the establishment of a functional governmental system.

The enemy center of gravity identified by UNITAF and the follow-on UNISOM II mission—the city of Mogadishu and the independent power of the warlords—may have led them towards the wrong objectives. Securing or controlling the city of Mogadishu did not achieve the end state objectives because the scope of the problem and the mission was countrywide. Targeting warlords and militia forces operating in Mogadishu resulted in the loss of the perception of UN impartiality. UN forces were declared an enemy to the people of Somalia causing further violence and ultimately making it impossible for the UN to accomplish their mission.

The ongoing US-led NATO operation in Bosnia continues to be a success story for the conduct of peace operations. Both the United Nations and NATO conducted a number of different peace operations throughout the Bosnian crisis. Peace enforcement is defined as operations where the use or threat of the use of military force is applied to compel one or more belligerents to act in compliance with generally accepted resolutions or sanctions. Peace enforcement began in March 1995 when NATO threatened Bosnian Serbs with air strikes if they did not stop their attacks against Muslims located in UN safe havens at Tuzla and in eastern Bosnia. The intensification of Serb attacks resulted in NATO finally approving air attacks against Serb ammunition storage sites and military installations.³² In peace enforcement operations such as the initial operations in Bosnia, where military force is used to attack a belligerent party, the applicability of determining a center of gravity is evident. The concept of centers of gravity aids in determining where to focus effort in order to compel the belligerent party to agree to an international resolution. However, the question remains of the applicability of usefulness of the concept once operations in Bosnia transitioned to peace keeping.

³² Brune, 87-103.

Forces preparing for deployment to Bosnia-Herzegovina faced an environment of massive population dislocation, destroyed infrastructure, a ruined economy, and a population of ethnic hatred. The US-led NATO force entered the theater with a mission to observe the application of the Dayton peace accord in order to give peace a chance. How did military commanders and planners apply theory and doctrine in their approach to help solve the problems of a country torn apart by civil war?

Dr. Peter J. Schifferle, LTC US Army (Retired), Director of the Advanced Operational Art Studies Fellowship, US Army School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, was the V US Corps' section chief for deliberate war plans and the lead planner for V US Corps' Bosnia operations from September, 1995 through November, 1996 and then Chief of Plans for US Army forces in Hungary from January, 1996 through July, 1997. He said planners for V US Corps did not conduct a center of gravity analysis for the force structure development or deployment planning phases in support of the Bosnia peacekeeping operations.³³ Although he believed a center of gravity analysis might have been useful as a self-assessment tool for V Corps, there was little utility in applying the concept to the enemy. He stated that because the belligerent parties agreed to the peace accord, there was no concrete element identified as the enemy. "The real enemy to the operation was crime, black marketing, and the general lack of the rule of law."³⁴

In an article published by the Eisenhower Institute, William L. Nash, General US Army (retired), appears to agree with Dr. Schifferle in the value of self-assessment by analyzing and identifying the center of gravity of the friendly forces. He states, "to achieve our maximum

³³ Peter J. Schifferle, PHD, Lieutenant Colonel, US Army (Ret), personal interview, 30 January 2003.

³⁴ Ibid.

capability in Bosnia-Herzegovina, our commander, 'General Mike,'³⁵ rightly identified cohesion as the center of gravity for the ARRC forces charged to enforce the military aspects of the Dayton Peace Accords.³⁶ General Nash believed identifying cohesion, as the friendly center of gravity was "an act of strategic genius"³⁷ in that it provided a common intent throughout the area of operation and did not allow separate national agendas to interfere with ARRC operations. Throughout his article, there is no discussion of an enemy or enemy center of gravity.

During a presentation at RAND Arroyo-TRADOC-MCWL-OSD Urban Operations Conference in March 2000, Colonel Greg Fontenot specifically addressed the concept of center of gravity in relation to the Bosnia peacekeeping operation.³⁸ The purpose of COL Fontenot's presentation was to discuss the tactical, operational, and strategic goals implicit in Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR and to review the means used to attain these goals. The brigade's area of operation consisted of 3,500 square kilometers and included people from all three of the ethnic factions: Serb, Muslim, and Croat. When 1st Brigade, 1st Armor Division, the Ready First Combat Team (RFCT), arrived at its area of operation, there were some thirty thousand armed forces from the three factions. COL Fontenot identified the operational objectives as: "disarm troops; make it hard to go to war (clear mines, blow bunkers, bury trenches); develop cooperation with civilian authorities and with [International Organizations/Non-governmental Organizations] IO/NGOs."³⁹ The tactical objectives were: "Separate forces; gain control of the AOR—contact

³⁵ General Mike refers British Army Lieutenant General Sir Michael Walker, Commander Allied Command Europe's Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) during Operation Joint Endeavor.

³⁶ William L. Nash, "NATO, Bosnia, and the Future," Eisenhower Institute [on-line]; available from <http://eisenhowerinstitute.org/programs/globalpartnerships/securityandterrorism/coalition/usandnato/natoatfiftybook/nash.htm>; Internet; accessed on 9 October 2002.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ COL Greg Fontenot was the first US brigade commander to assume responsibility for the American sector of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

³⁹ Greg Fontenot, Colonel, US Army, "The Urban Area During Stability Missions Case Study: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Part 1," From the proceedings of the Rand Arroyo-TRADOC-MCWL-OSD Urban

civil authorities and IO/NGO.”⁴⁰ In his center of gravity analysis he claims the town of Brcko to be both a decisive point and the center of gravity for Multi-National Division (MND) North sector. However, *FM 3-0* states, “decisive points are not center of gravity; they are keys to attacking or protecting them.”⁴¹ COL Fontenot was correct in identifying Brcko as a decisive point however; the city clearly did not meet the definition of a center of gravity found in FM 3.0 or any theorist’s idea of a center of gravity. COL Fontenot’s reasoning for identifying the city as the center of gravity is: (1) Some observers argued Brcko held the key to achieving the objectives of the Dayton Accords because it was bitterly contested during the war and during peace negotiations at Dayton; (2) It was the center of gravity both in military and economic terms; (3) All three ethnic groups were in the town; (4) There were eleven known war crimes sites there; (5) It was symbolic for the blown bridges at the start of the Bosnian Civil War; and (6) It was ideal to defend because there was no easy way to bypass it and there were no concealed approaches to the town.⁴² Understanding that the RFCT lacked sufficient force strength to control all of the towns in their area of operation, COL Fontenot applied the concept of center of gravity as a tool to focus the military operation. The RFCT attempted to influence the center of gravity by aggressively patrolling selected checkpoints in and around the town of Brcko. Additionally, a plan was in place to isolate the town if necessary; and the largest infantry force was assigned to Brcko, the smallest area of responsibility.

David Lange, in an article published in the spring 1999 edition of *Parameters*, first identifies Serb hard-liners as an enemy center of gravity. If one deems Serb hard-liners as the enemy to the establishment of the new Republic of Srpska government and the Madame Plavsic, the President

Operations Conference, 22-23 March 2000 [on-line]; available from <http://www.rand.org/publications/CF/CF162.appf.pdf>; accessed 14 November 2002.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ *FM 3-0, Operations*.

⁴² Fontenot.

of the Bosnia's Serb entity as the friendly force, then this may be an accurate application of the concept. Lange wrote, "Madame Plavsic had a historic chance to forge a coalition free of the influence of indicted war criminals. But her next challenge was in getting the members in session...."⁴³ In order to seat the new parliament, some newly elected members had to cross ethnic boundary lines so they could vote to form a new government. Threats and acts of violence by Serb hard-liners sabotaged Plavsic's initial attempt to seat parliament, and their strategy would be to disrupt any future attempts. If they could keep parliament from meeting, they could insist that Plavsic's potential coalition was not a viable option and power would swing back to the hard-liners. NATO's Commander Stabilization Force (COMSFOR) set into motion a strategy to deny the Serb hard-liners their strengths, therefore increasing the probability that Plavsic would be able to form the coalition necessary to vote for a new government.

Using the concept of center of gravity to focus military operations, COMSFOR took the following steps to influence the enemy center of gravity: (1) To nullify the threats of violence, SFOR transported non-Serb delegates across the inter-entity boundary line to Bijeljina in order to sit in parliamentary meetings; (2) Exploiting the ultranationalists' fear of open government deliberations, SFOR assisted in the television transmission of parliamentary proceedings. This kept the hard-liners from disrupting the meeting for fear of being seen as responsible for the inability of their government to function; and (3) SFOR maintained a presence in and around Bijeljina to reinforce the message that SFOR was in control of the situation. With SFOR's assistance, the Republic of Srpska parliament met and President Plavsic succeeded in forming a coalition.⁴⁴

⁴³ David Lange, "The Role of the Political Adviser in Peace Keeping Operations," *Parameters* (Spring 1999): 92-109 [article on-line]; available from <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/99spring/lange.htm>; accessed 9 October 2002.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

The "people of the nation" or will of the people to support the peace process is the final and most probable example of an identified center of gravity for the Bosnia crisis. In the winter 1998 edition of *Parameters*, Max G. Manwaring wrote that in an intrastate conflict such as in the former Republic of Yugoslavia, the people are the ultimate enemy center of gravity. "...antagonists can strive to achieve the Clausewitzian admonition to 'dare to win all'—the complete political overthrow of a government—instead of simply attempting to obtain leverage for limited territorial, political, economic, and social concessions in the more traditional sense."⁴⁵ In this case, the friendly center of gravity would be the will of the people therefore; protecting it would become critical. Manwaring states in an environment such as this, tanks and aircraft could be irrelevant or even counterproductive. Responses to direct and indirect threats must be primarily political and psychological. The more subtle use of political, economic, psychological, and moral power—supported by information operations and careful intelligence work—would be important means of defending such a center of gravity. Manwaring's interpretation of the concept demonstrates the difficulties in determining a center of gravity in peacekeeping operations. This theme of confusion and difficulties involved in determining a center of gravity and applying the concept to peace operations—other than peace enforcement—will be further explored with analyses of US operations in Haiti.

In October 1993, a special planning group was developed in Norfolk, VA to address the situation in Haiti. The first Operation Plan 2370 (OPLAN 2370) consisted of a forcible entry option to create a secure and stable environment in order to return democracy to Haiti.⁴⁶ This plan identified operational level center of gravity as the capital city Port-au-Prince and the

⁴⁵ Max G. Manwaring, PhD. (Colonel, US Army Retired) is an adjunct professor of political science at Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA and a political-military affairs consultant. See Max G. Manwaring, "Peace and Stability Lessons from Bosnia," *Parameters* (Winter 1998): 28-38 [article on-line]; available from <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/98winter/manwarin.htm> accessed 9 October 2002.

⁴⁶ John R. Ballard, *Upholding Democracy: The United States Military Campaign in Haiti, 1994-1997* (Westport, CT :Praeger Publishers, 1998), 65.

strategic center of gravity was US public support for an invasion and the political leadership's will to see it through. The Haitian center of gravity was deemed the politico-military leadership and the operational center of gravity was the FAD'H—armed forces of Haiti.⁴⁷ The plan executed on 19 September 1993 became known as OPLAN 2380—Plus. The plan called for the force package associated with OPLAN 2380⁴⁸ however the operational conditions of the plan changed from a benign entry to an uncertain environment. Although the operational construct of the mission changed from forcible entry to an uncertain environment, there was no change in the identified centers of gravity.

The problems the 10th Mountain experienced in Somalia influenced the identification of the friendly strategic center of gravity. Similar to Somalia, where the center of gravity was determined to be Mogadishu, planners mistakenly identified Port-au-Prince as the operational center of gravity. Clearly Port-au-Prince was politically significant to the populous and was a key hub for US lines of communications but it was not the hub of all power and movement, which everything depends. Given the capabilities of the US military force poses, other locations may have served as the major logistics hub for the operation. Like Mogadishu, it may have been more beneficial to name Port-au-Prince a decisive point in order to focus friendly efforts on a center of gravity with a greater operational impact on the mission. In Haiti, as identified in other peace operations, the first problem was identification of an enemy; there was no single organization to be deemed the enemy. In this case, as in many peace environments, the true enemy would be a breakdown in the peace process. If this is the agreed enemy then its center of gravity may be the environmental conditions that promote violence. Although abstract, determining such a center of gravity would then guide planners in determining objectives and decisive points along logical

⁴⁷ Walter E. Kretchick, Robert F. Bauman, and John T. Fishel, *A Concise History of the US Army in Operation Uphold Democracy: Invasion, Intervention, "Intervasion"* (FT Leavenworth: US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1998), 48.

⁴⁸ OPLAN 2380 called for the deployment of military forces with a benign entry. See Kretchick, 78.

lines of operation to reduce or affect the conditions that promote violence, with the ultimate goal of achieving the desired end state. Examples of these objectives or decisive points could be the reduction of black marketing, establishment of law enforcement, and disarmament of the populous. At the operational level, one may conclude force protection became the actual friendly center of gravity.

The 10th Mountain Division was the Joint Task Force 190(JTF 190) headquarters, under the command of Major General David C. Meade. MG Meade implemented a strict force protection policy and hesitated in becoming engaged with the local populous. According to LTC Edward Anderson, the J3 civil affairs officer with JTF 180, “the JTF 190 commander and staff did not share LTG Shelton’s view that the mission required US forces to become attuned to ‘street rhythms’ and therefore to maximize engagement with the populace.”⁴⁹ 10th Mountain soldiers were not allowed outside their secure compound and were ordered not to fraternize with Haitians through the chain-link fence. Because of this great concern for force protection, 10th Mountain forces did not patrol the city of Port-au-Prince at night, therefore leaving the streets free to the armed thugs. Had the operational center of gravity been determined to be the support of the people, the concept may have focused the military effort more to protecting the people and fostering their support to US forces. Far more contact with the local people on their streets would serve to create the proper psychological climate for the restoration of civil life and yield a vast amount of information on local circumstances and events. Instead, what occurred was JTF 190 occupied Port-au-Prince and then concentrated on force protection. Consequently, the local Haitians who were willing to provide valuable information to JTF 190 were left vulnerable to reprisal. Every morning, during the initial weeks of the operation, dead bodies could be found in the streets of Port-au-Prince.⁵⁰ JTF 190 and the initial planners experienced difficulties in

⁴⁹ Ibid., 100.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 103-14.

identifying useful centers of gravity and the confusion in applying this concept to military peace operations.

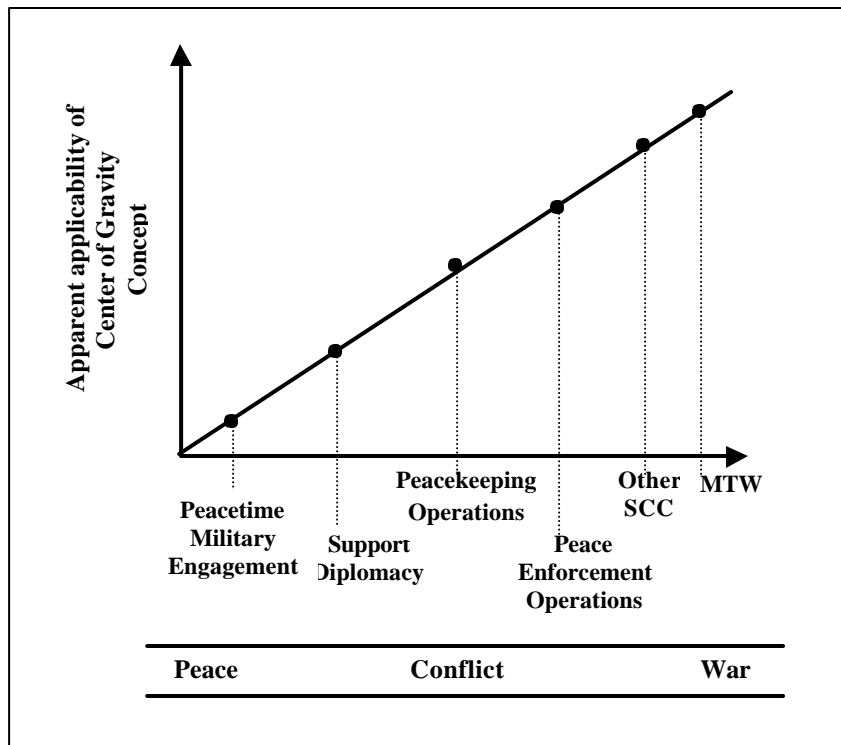


Figure 1. Applying the Center of Gravity Concept Across Full Spectrum Operations

It is evident US Army doctrine does not adequately describe how one determines a center of gravity in peace operations or its application during planning or execution of military peace operations in support of achieving the desired end state. This is truly the crutch of the problem. *FM 100-23*, the US Army's capstone doctrine for peace operations, does not adequately develop the concept. Research has also shown US doctrine does not mirror Clausewitz's original theory of center of gravity, nor should it. Although his general concepts remain unchanged, his model has evolved over time in an attempt to meet the challenging situations facing military forces today. Whether this is right or wrong depends on how and where the concept of center of gravity

is applied. The purpose of this monograph is to determine the applicability of the center of gravity concept in planning peace operations. One could relate the answer to this question to a simple line graph (Figure 1) where the top of the y-axis is peace enforcement and the bottom is support and stability operations with peace keeping somewhere in between. Along the x-axis is the degree of applicability of the concept. Where the two points meet is the degree of applicability for a given type of peace operation.

Evidence demonstrates a clear applicability in peace enforcement operations where military force or the threat of its use is necessary to compel a belligerent to comply with international peace accords. The belligerent force is deemed the enemy and both enemy and friendly centers of gravity are identified to focus planning and execution of military operations. Conversely, in support operations where military forces respond to a crisis such as Hurricane Andrew, there is no enemy to the military operation so the application of the concept is very low, if it exists at all.

The gray area in determining the applicability of the concept is found during peacekeeping operations. Here the applicability is in relation to the degree of consent given by the belligerent party. In a case such as in Bosnia where a belligerent faction or organized group is trying to prevent the seating of the newly elected parliament, an enemy with a center of gravity can be identified for that specific situation. However, in peace keeping operations in general, it will be much more difficult to determine the enemy.

Because Army doctrine does not adequately address a method for selecting centers of gravity, there is an increased risk of inappropriate selection. Military commanders and planners often confuse the operational center of gravity with other strategic and operational concepts such as decisive points, critical capabilities, and vulnerabilities. As a result, they attempt to assign a center of gravity where none exists or the value in determining one is minimal, such as in a peacekeeping environment. Additionally, during peace operations planning, centers of gravity are often selected without a clear end state. The Somalia case study is an excellent example of this issue. The critical task of UNITAF was to create the secure environment necessary for the

UN to provide humanitarian relief. However, it was not understood what the end state should be. Was the end state disarmament and control of the city of Mogadishu or simply secure routes? At the operational level, the end state is the conditions that, when achieved, accomplish the mission. Therefore, the desired end state must drive the selection of the enemy center of gravity.

Finally, the major contribution of the concept, in most peace operations, is in identifying friendly centers of gravity. Used as a valid self-assessment tool, identifying the friendly centers of gravity will focus efforts to protect what is most important to the friendly force. However, great care must be taken to not confuse friendly centers of gravity with critical capabilities, requirements, or—the topic of the next chapter—decisive points.

CHAPTER 3: DECISIVE POINTS & Lines of Operations

In planning at the operational level of war, once the center of gravity is defined, decisive points and objectives are identified that must be achieved in order to affect the center of gravity and achieve our end state. In combat operations these decisive points can be canalizing terrain, airports, river crossings, certain activities such as forward passage of lines, or a specific command and control node. The identification of decisive points will aid commanders and military planners in the determination of critical tasks or objectives. Therefore, the concept of decisive points will be explored in the context of theory, doctrine, history, and the relevance or applicability of the concept in planning modern peace operations.

The 19th century military theorist Antoine Henri Jomini, who served both with Napoleon's Grand Armee and the Czar of Russia's Imperial Army, addresses the concept of decisive points in his work, *Art of War*. In the section of his book titled "Strategic, Decisive, and Objective Points" Jomini identifies both decisive geographic points and decisive strategic points. The example he gives for decisive geographic points are those points which the possession of would give control of the junctions of several valleys and which are the center of chief lines of communication are decisive geographic points. Decisive strategic points are those whose importance is constant and

immense, "...those which are capable of exercising a marked influence either upon the result of the campaign or upon a single enterprise."⁵¹ Additionally, one of Jomini's maxims to the "Fundamental Principle of War" is "To throw by strategic movements the mass of an army, successively, upon the decisive points of a theater of war...."

Carl Von Clausewitz also wrote of decisive points in an essay titled, "Principles of War." In this essay, he wrote of principles at both the tactical and strategic levels of war that are synonymous to today's concept of decisive points. In section two, "Tactics," he wrote, "...we should choose as object of our offensive that section of the enemy's army whose defeat will give us decisive advantages."⁵² Tactically this is analogous to massing forces at the decisive point.

In section three, "Strategy," Clausewitz developed three "General Principles" of strategy. These principles are: 1) to conquer and destroy the enemy's armed forces; 2) seize his materials and other sources of strength, and 3) gain public opinion.⁵³ In support of his second principle he stated, "...we should direct our operations against the places where most of these resources are concentrated: principal cities, storehouses, and large fortresses."⁵⁴ Additionally in regard to strategy, Clausewitz understood and wrote about the geographic advantage in controlling river crossings, critical passes, and mountain plateaus in addition to the logical advantage of reserves and troop replacement.⁵⁵ Each of these examples fall within today's doctrinal definition of decisive points.

US Army FM 3-0 defines a decisive point as "a geographic place, specific key event, or enabling system that allows commanders to gain a marked advantage over an enemy and greatly

⁵¹ *Roots of Strategy: Book 2, "Jomini's Art of War"* (Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1987), 467.

⁵² *Roots of Strategy: Book 2, "Clausewitz's Principles of War"* (Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1987, 328.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 349.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 350.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 360-63.

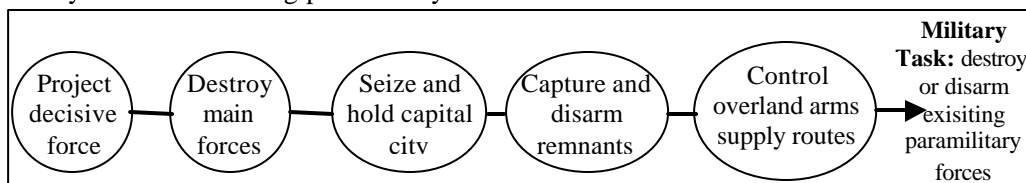
influence the outcome of an attack.” Most importantly, FM 3-0 explains decisive points are not centers of gravity but instead, they are the means to attack or protect them. During an operation, military forces will attempt to control, destroy, or neutralize decisive points in order affect an enemies center of gravity; therefore gaining an advantage over the enemy or forcing him to yield to our will. According to doctrine, there can and will be multiple decisive points in an operation. Once selected for action, decisive points become objectives.

Decisive point appears to be the “catch-all” term for US Army doctrine. It could be a geographic point, such as a port facility; an enabling system such, as a command post; or a key event, such as the commitment of reserves or the deployment of reconnaissance elements. FM 3-0 states that the ability to select the decisive points that best overcome the enemy’s center of gravity, and act on these points as objectives, is operational art. Because of the correlation between decisive points and center of gravity, it is important to also understand lines of operation act as the link between these two concepts.

According to FM 3-0 lines of operation define the directional orientation of the force in time and space in relation to the enemy. Lines of operations are physical or logical links from a base of operation to an objective with an overall intent of affecting the adversary’s center of gravity. In cases such as peace operations, when positional reference to an enemy or adversary has little relevance, it becomes more advantageous to visualize the operation along logical lines.

“Commanders link multiple objectives and actions with the logic of purpose—cause and effect.”⁵⁶

Figure 2 is an example of the logical lines of operation to achieve the military objective to destroy or disarm existing paramilitary forces.



⁵⁶ FM 3-0, *Operations*, 5-9.

Figure 2. Logical Lines of Operation⁵⁷

Although an important concept in combat operations planning, the term decisive point is not found anywhere within the text of FM 100-23, Peace Operations. However, FM 3-0 articulates the concept of decisive point will appear to have a different meaning in peace operations. In such operations, a decisive point may be physical or geographic in nature, but its real effect will be psychological. An example of this idea was the attempted disarming of Somali's. This action, although physical, was a statement that UN forces had stabilized the environment and therefore it was no longer necessary for the Somali population to arm itself.

It is clear that in combat operations, determining decisive points and subsequent objectives are predicated on the identification of a center of gravity. The three case studies show the identified centers of gravity more closely meet the doctrinal definition for a decisive point. During peace operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, COL Fontenot briefed, the reason for naming Brcko the center of gravity was because it was "the key point on the ground," it was ideal to defend from, and it was key economically.⁵⁸ Similar criteria were identified for selecting Mogadishu and Port-au-Prince as centers of gravity during operations in Somalia and Haiti respectively. As a result, it is difficult to determine how the centers of gravity drove the selection of decisive points and lines of operation in support of these operations. In order to continue the discussion on decisive points, analysis of the case studies will show the military conditions with associated decisive points and lines of operations as a means of demonstrating how these concepts are used as tools in planning for peace operations.

During peace operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, COL Fontenot and Task Force Eagle planners determined the enemy center of gravity in MND North to be the city of Brcko. In

⁵⁷ Ibid., Figure 5-3.

⁵⁸ Fontenot.

determining the decisive points it is necessary to look at logical lines of operations; what geographic place, specific event, or enabling systems was identified as decisive; and how they did or didn't help 1AD in accomplishing its mission.

According to COL Fontenot, "Some observers argued that Brcko and the Posovina Corridor held the key to achieving the ends of the Dayton Accords."⁵⁹ In order to promote peace within the city of Brcko, the following objectives were identified: control of the city, disarm, economic recovery, and engagement. Figure 3 identifies the logical lines of operations to achieve these objectives.

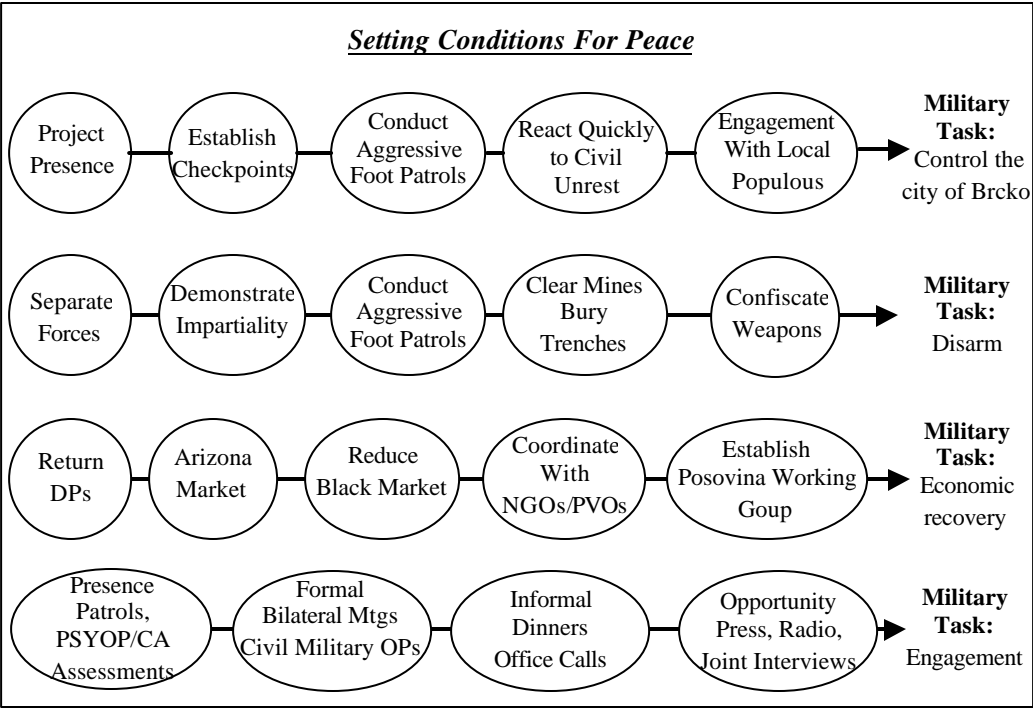


Figure 3 Brcko Logical Lines of Operation

The points shown in Figure 3 were the necessary objectives, events, or conditions to be met in order to achieve the military conditions. According to COL Fontenot, Task Force Eagle was successful in beginning the peace process. "By the end of our tour, routine compliance was the

⁵⁹ Fontenot.

order of the day. Some \$44 million had been brought into the area...some three hundred homes were started in Brecko suburbs.’⁶⁰ The application of the concepts of decisive points and lines of operation focused the planning and daily operations of Task Force Eagle, enabling the first steps towards reconciliation and a lasting peace for the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Planners from JTF 190 similarly applied the concept of decisive points as a tool to focus their planning and execution in support of peace operations in Haiti.

Planners from JTF 190 faced a unique and challenging problem in planning for peace operations in Haiti. OPLAN 2380 Plus was based on an ambiguous assessment of entry conditions in Haiti. Where OPLAN 2370 was based on an opposed entry and OPLAN 2380 was based on a benign entry, OPLAN 2380 Plus was based on an unknown threat. As a result, force protection measures may have created the unnecessary, additional friction that hampered JTF 190 during the first few weeks of their mission. Their mission was:

...to establish and maintain a stable and secure environment; to facilitate the return and proper functioning of the government of Haiti (GOH), to provide logistical support to coalition forces; to professionalize the military component of Haitian public security forces; and, on order, to turn over responsibility for ongoing operations to the government of Haiti or designated international organizations.⁶¹

As pointed out in chapter 2, planners of this mission mistakenly identified the cities of Port-au-Prince as the primary and Cap Haitian as a secondary center of gravity. However, the objectives selected clearly support the achievement of military objectives that would prevent the environmental conditions that promote violence. Initially during the deployment phase of the operation there were clear geographic decisive points and lines of operation. For the first phase of the operation the lines of operation were from the USS *Eisenhower* to the airports of Port-au-Prince and Cap Haitian. As the mission advanced logical lines of operation became more

⁶⁰ Fontenot.

⁶¹ US Army 10th Mountain Division, “10th Mountain Division: Operations in Haiti, August 1994 thru January 1995,” slide presentation and after-action report [on compact disk], available at the Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

dominant. Figure 4 shows JTF 190’s logical lines of operations and decisive points identified in order to accomplish their mission of establishing and maintaining a stable and secure environment.

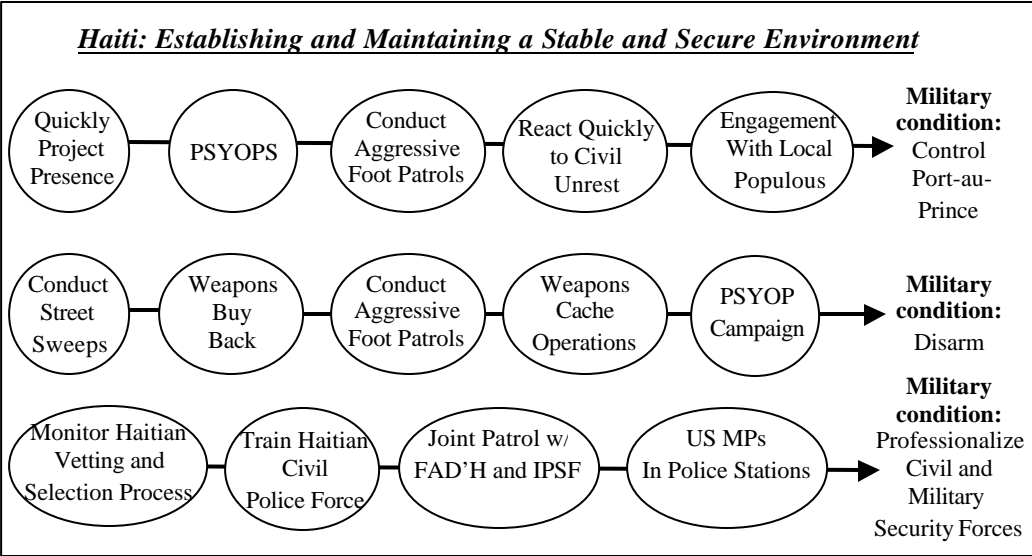


Figure 4 Haiti Logical Lines of Operation⁶²

In planning combat operations, decisive points are identified along lines of operations in order to achieve an objective that will ultimately affect the enemy’s center of gravity. In peace operations, it is questionable whether the concept of center of gravity is applicable. Although FM 3-0 and US Army doctrine for peace operations lacks clear definitions or instruction for the application of the concept of decisive points, historical case studies analyzed demonstrate the application of the concept; with or without a definite, identified center of gravity. Research also shows in a peace operations environment, decisive points and their subsequent lines of operations are more logical than physical or geographical. As apposed to identifying an enemy center of gravity, it appears more useful in planning peace operations to identify military conditions that

⁶² Ibid.

must be met to achieve the military end state and then develop logical lines of operations to support these conditions. Jomini wrote, “although it is easy to recommend attacking the decisive points, the difficulty lies in recognizing those points.” By identifying an incorrect center of gravity, one risks planning and establishing decisive points and lines of operations that do not support the achievement of the end state. Additionally, not recognizing decisive points could result in missed opportunities to further the peace process.

CHAPTER 4: RECOMENDATION

The elements of operational design found in FM 3-0 are crucial to planning combat operations. Although doctrine suggests the application of these same elements to planning peace operations, how these elements are applied to such operations is ambiguous and poorly defined. As a result, military planners often approach potential operations in a peace environment in the same manner they would approach combat operations planning. COL Thomas Miller, JTF 190, J3—Haiti operations—stated, “...you treat every single operation you do as a combat operation.”⁶³ The problem with this model in a peace environment is, by treating every mission as a combat operation, there is a risk in alienating the force from the people they are trying to help and reducing the perception of the legitimacy of the force and mission. The main recommendation of this monograph is to modify our doctrine; adding to it a more precise guide to planning peace operations and changing how we approach peace operations.

At a minimum Army peace doctrine should identify the differences in planning peace operations. Clearly, any element of the Army must be capable of operating in either a combat or peace environment, or better said, they must be able to conduct full spectrum operations. However, this does not mean all missions require the same approach to planning and problem solving. Army doctrine must identify the terms and concepts of operational design that are applicable to peace operations, and provide specific definitions of these terms or concepts in

⁶³ Kretchik, Baumann, Fishel, 191.

relation to the peace environment. Only through this change in doctrine—not all operations are solved through the same process—will the mental tools and concepts be available for military planners to develop affective models in how they approach peace operations.

The first recommended change to the Army planning model for how to approach peace operations is to change how the enemy is defined. In peace operations often there is no single organization to label the enemy. More likely, the enemy in a peace operation will be a characteristic of the environment such as starvation, lawlessness, and violence. By ignoring this reality there is a risk in failing to identify the true decisive points and objectives necessary to achieve a stable environment and a lasting peace.

If in peace operations it is difficult to identify the enemy, it becomes even more difficult identifying the enemy's center of gravity. In all three of the historical case studies, military commanders and planners identified major cities as the centers of gravity. The first question is, whose centers of gravity were they? It appears the cities were titled centers of gravity because who ever controlled them held the advantage of logistics distribution, were able to affect the local political situation, and possibly held the key to the economic redevelopment of the region. As stated in chapter 2, the reasons for identifying the cities as centers of gravity more closely relate to the definition of decisive points. The second question is if these were centers of gravity, how were they destroyed or neutralized in order to achieve the end state? It is clear that commanders and planners involved in these peace operations modified their definition of center of gravity in a way they thought best met their needs. The final question is why should commanders or planners modify their definition? Although identifying an enemy center of gravity may not be of value in peace operations planning, in any environment, peace or combat, the concept of center of gravity is a valuable tool in analyzing the friendly situation. Specifically in planning for peace operations it is important to clearly understand what the friendly sources of strength, legitimacy, and resolve are. Critical analysis of friendly centers of gravity will identify those characteristics or capabilities that friendly forces must protect. As an example, in Somalia it might have been

advantageous to identify US public support as a friendly source of power and freedom of action. It was the support of the American people that drove political decisions to involve US military forces in providing humanitarian relief to Somalia. Had the military and political leaders critically analyzed this as a center of gravity, they may have determined that casualties were a critical vulnerability necessitating extreme caution. Because intervention in Somalia was not a vital national interest of the United States, losing American lives would jeopardize public support of the mission. Again, had this analysis been completed, it should have resulted in a closer look at risks being taken and the assurance that the forces on the ground had the equipment and capabilities to accomplish the missions assigned.

If the identifying an enemy center of gravity is of little value in the planning of peace operations, what concept should be added to doctrine to assist military planners? In his book, *The Logic of Failure: Why Things Go Wrong and What We Can Do to Make Them Right*, Dietrich Dorner recommends we consider the problem as a system; analyzing the different components of the problem and how these components interact.⁶⁴ Dorner says that although this sounds clear and obvious, history provides many examples when the systemic nature of a problem was ignored. A system is a network of variables in causal relationships with one another. In many cases it is virtually impossible to change one variable without affecting the other variable within the system. Therefore, in a peace operations environment it would be more valuable to analyze the many systems within the situation then to concentrate on an enemy center of gravity. By concentrating on the problem as a group of systems, analysis will show how each system interacts with other systems within the operational area. This may prevent planners from promoting the wrong decisive points, lines of operation, or objectives in attempt to achieve the military end state. The historical case study that best demonstrates the value of a systems approach is the UN's intervention in Somalia.

⁶⁴ Dietrich Dorner, *Why Things Go Wrong and What We Can Do to Make Them Right*, translated by Rita and Robert Kimber (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 71-6.

During the 1980's many Somali's died from repression by Siad Barre's government and the outbreak of the civil war. The government of Somalia completely broke down by 1991; providing an environment for banditry and clan wars. By the time the UN did intervene (UNISOM I), some 300,000 people had died of hunger and related disease, and thousands more were casualties of repression and civil war.⁶⁵ The UN intervened with the intention of observing the distribution of the humanitarian supplies provided by PVO's and NGO's without considering the political anarchy plaguing the nation. Although within the country there was a surplus of food and humanitarian supplies, banditry and clan wars made distribution of these supplies virtually impossible. Bandits and warlords first received profits by stealing the humanitarian supplies and then by providing security to the volunteer organizations and the distribution of supplies. In November 1992, President Bush ordered the deployment of 28,000 US troops (UNITAF) to Somalia with a mission to provide a safe and secure environment for the distribution of humanitarian supplies.

It was the intent of the US to quickly accomplish this limited end state and then turn control of the operation back to the UN. Once again, there was no commitment to help solve Somalia's political problems.⁶⁶ Initially the warlords agreed to allow the deployment of US forces however, as the warlords' profits from banditry and strong-arming the relief agencies began to fall, unrest began to rise throughout the city of Mogadishu. Both the UN and the US narrowly focused on the distribution of relief supplies instead of approaching the problem as a system and analyzing what the root cause of the problem was. Had a system analysis been conducted it would have identified the political anarchy throughout the country was the cause of the starvation that plagued the nation. Early intervention may have helped the Somalia people reorganize a

⁶⁵ Mohamed Sahnoun, *Somalia, The missed Opportunities* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1994), 6-10.

⁶⁶ Brune, 20.

government who in turn could raise a police and military force to secure the environment in order to allow the relief agencies to accomplish their humanitarian mission. Instead, the UN attempted to secure the environment. The UN, both UNISOM and UNITAF, overlooked the possible negative side effects of their actions; ultimately doing more harm than good by allowing the political anarchy within Somalia to continue to grow. The warring clans became tired of waiting for the UN to leave and began raising the friction between the international force and the people of Somalia. The concepts of decisive points and logical lines of operations lend themselves to Dorner's systems theory and should be emphasized in our peace operations doctrine.

Dorner emphasizes, "considering the system means more than simply acknowledging the existence of man variables."⁶⁷ It requires a complete analysis of the system variables; how they affect one another and themselves. Joint doctrine defines concepts of critical capabilities, critical requirements and critical vulnerabilities in regards to attacking an enemy's center of gravity. This concept could be easily adapted to peace operations with a linkage to decisive points, lines of operations, and objectives. Military planners should first look at the desired end state and identify the objectives—key tasks, conditions, or requirements—necessary to attain the end state. The next step would be to view these objectives as systems, identifying the critical capabilities or requirements necessary to achieve the objective. These critical capabilities or requirements become the decisive points, linked along logical lines of operations, in achieving the objective. This process works for both offensive and defensive activities undertaken in peace operations.

Using the case study of Haiti as an example, one of the critical tasks assigned to JTF 190 was to maintain a stable and secure environment. One system that has a negative impact on accomplishing this end state is crime. Taking the systems approach, one could look at what variables support criminal activities. Examples of these variables are: black marketing, weapons proliferation, unemployment, economic instability, gang violence, corrupt law enforcement, and opportunity. Planners would then look at what systems or variable introduced into the system

will neutralize these variables. These variables to be introduced into the system become decisive points linked by logical lines of operation. Examples are: civil crime prevention programs, a program of vetting undesirable personnel from the Haitian police force, control of critical supplies to prevent their introduction to the black market, aggressive patrolling, formal and informal programs for engagement with the local population, weapons buy back programs, street sweep operations, and raids on weapons caches. Through analysis of multiple objectives planners will identify variables that appear along multiple lines of operations. Such variables become critical variables; so named because as an individual variable they interact with a large number of systems. An economy of force may be used to affect multiple objectives through a single variable or decisive point. By identifying these critical variables is one way of preventing what Dorner identified as unwanted side effects. Planners can identify variable that may cause a positive affect along one line of operation however, these variables may cause a negative affect along another. An example of this comes from the Somalia case study where UNITAF provided a safe environment for the distribution of humanitarian supplies. As a result, warlords lost profits from black marketing critical supplies; ultimately causing friction between UN forces and the local militias. Identifying this problem early would provide the planners with the opportunity to mitigate the risks of increasing friction between the warlord's militias and UN forces. Therefore, it is critical to analyze second and third order effects of applying variables or decisive points to a system to ensure unwanted effects are prevented or at least understood.

Finally, using a systems approach, planners must identify what variables may be added to a system that would prevent the attainment of the end state. As an example, if the objective is to maintain a safe and secure environment, planners would identify those situations, or actions that would degrade the safety or security of the peace environment. Losing the perception of impartiality, violent demonstrations, the loss of legitimacy, and civilian casualties are situations that may degrade or reduce the effectiveness of the peace process. From here, planners will

⁶⁷ Dorner, 74.

identify the means to prevent or reduce the effects of the introduction of these negative variables. Planning for peace operations, through the systems approach, incorporating decisive points that are linked along logical lines of operations to an objective and end state, provides military commanders and planners tools to focus their effort, analyzing the root cause of the problem and the second and third order effects of their plans and actions.

The scope of this research limited the depth of analysis of many of the systems theorist. A recommendation for further study is the area of systems theory and how to best apply this theory to military operations; specifically its application in peace operations. Additionally the study of other nations to include the UN's doctrine on peace operations may provide valuable examples of ways to apply systems theories to our peace operations doctrine.

The final recommendation is to review both Army and Joint, peace and operations doctrine to ensure any recommended changes are proliferated and integrated through out the services. Planners across the services must work from a set of common definitions and concepts to enable the joint integration of the planning process. Additionally, strategic leaders must understand our peace operations doctrine in order to ensure they provide adequate guidance and input to the planning process.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

As the United States prosecutes the war on terrorism and the war against the regime of Iraq, leaders are demonstrating the foresight in looking ahead to the stability operations that must immediately follow combat operations in order to promote a lasting peace once the soldiers redeploy. Long before the fall of the Iraqi regime, soldiers are providing humanitarian relief to end the suffering of the local population. History has shown, the US's ability to participate in international peace operations is often a decisive point in achieving an environment conducive to the peace process. The Army will continue to be called upon to conduct full spectrum operations.

Therefore, doctrine must be robust, full spectrum, yet situational specific in order to provide the mental tools to guide the military in the planning and executing these future missions.

This monograph analyzed history, theory, and doctrine in order to determine if the concepts of operational design, specifically centers of gravity, decisive points and lines of operation, are applicable to planning peace operations. Three case studies; concentrating on the US involvement in Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti; were analyzed to provide a historical perspective of how these concepts of operational design have been applied in past operations.

The case studies were inconclusive in deriving a clear description of the use of the concept of center of gravity in planning and executing peace operations. There was no identifiable methodology in selecting a center of gravity and there was no recognizable standard of what to do with the center of gravity once it was identified. Analysis of doctrine and the works of Clausewitz detail the importance of center of gravity selection to traditional combat operations. Even during peace enforcement operations where military force may be used against one or more belligerent parties in order to coheres them into agreeing with a peace initiative, there is a recognizable application of the concept. In both combat operations and peace enforcement, the identification of the enemy or at least a potential enemy is understandable. Therefore, identifying an enemy center of gravity is relevant to the situation. However, when we begin planning for peacekeeping operations, the physical presence or nature of an enemy is no longer apparent and defining an enemy center of gravity becomes more and more irrelevant. Research showed, more practical to the peace planning process are the concepts of decisive points and lines of operations.

FM 3-0 identifies decisive points and lines of operations as two concepts of operational design. Although these concepts are not defined or identified in our peace operations doctrine, they are relevant concepts across the full spectrum of operations. The application of these concepts in planning peace operations provide military commanders and planners tools to focus their efforts in achieving the military end state.

The concept of an enemy center of gravity has little applicability in peacekeeping operations. However, other concepts of operational design appear to be valuable in guiding our peacekeeping efforts. Therefore, we should reduce the emphasis placed on identifying centers of gravity and transform our peace operations doctrine to provide better tools for assisting commanders and planners involved in peace operations. The primary recommendation is to apply a systems approach, based on the study of Dietrich Dorner, to solving the complex problems found in the peacekeeping environment. A system analysis must be completed in order to identify the critical variables, both positive and negative, that will have the greatest effect on the overall objective. Instead of focusing on an elusive center of gravity, using a systems approach focuses effort towards the root causes of a problem and the individual systems that can be effected in order to achieve the desired end state. Army and Joint doctrine must recognize the vast differences between a traditional combat and peace environment. The different environments require different actions to achieve the end state. Therefore, peace operations doctrine must be more specific and relevant to planning peace operations and better tailored for such an environment. In order for doctrine to be of value in planning future military peace keeping operations, it must provide the tools necessary to identify key systems or variables within the environment that will best effect the achievement of the desired end state while avoiding undesired side effects.

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